Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. - 16. (Canceled)

17. (New) An automatic analyzer that analyzes samples using disposable parts used in contact with the samples, comprising:

a supply lifter that raises a plurality of part racks holding unused disposable parts to a rack separation station, while keeping the part racks stacked together;

a rack separator that separates an uppermost part rack of said part racks from remaining said part racks so as to retain the separated uppermost part rack at said rack separation station;

a recovery lifter that operates after the parts on the separated part rack have been consumed, to move the separated part rack downward for recovery; and

a movable table having the supply lifter and the recovery lifter mounted thereon in a back-to-back relationship, wherein equipment for positioning the supply lifter and the recovery lifter is located between the supply lifter and the recovery lifter to achieve a compact configuration.

18. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 17, further including

a controller, said controller being able to determine the number of part racks remaining on said supply lifter.

19. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 18, wherein

said controller is able to determine the number of part racks that can be added to said supply lifter.

20. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 17, wherein

said equipment located between the supply lifter and the recovery lifter includes:

a first belt and first motor for controlling the position of the supply lifter, and

a second belt and a second motor for controlling the position of the recovery lifter.

21. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 17, wherein

said supply lifter, said recovery lifter, and said movable table are housed in a rack lift chamber having a door,

wherein said door is automatically locked while said supply lifter or said recovery lifter is in operation for preventing access thereto, and

wherein said door is able to be opened when both of said recovery lifter and said supply lifter are in an inactive position.

22. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 17, wherein

by pulling out said movable table, an operator is able to add part racks holding parts to said supply lifter or remove used part racks from said recovery lifter while said analyzer continues to analyze samples.

23. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 17, wherein

a first rack position sensor senses the uppermost one of the part racks,

a second rack position sensor senses a second part rack located under the uppermost one of the stacked part racks arranged in the vicinity of said rack separation station,

a controller determines whether or not said uppermost part rack has been properly separated from the other part racks on the basis of sensed information from said first and second rack position sensors, and

based on the determination, the controller judges whether to continue operation or interrupt the operation and sound an alarm.

24. (New) An automatic analyzer that analyzes samples using parts used in contact with the samples and changed for each sample, comprising:

a supply lifter that raises a plurality of part racks holding parts to a rack separation station, while keeping the part racks stacked together;

a recovery lifter for receiving part racks following processing;

a rack separator that separates an uppermost one of the stacked part racks so as to leave the uppermost part rack on a rack separation station;

a controller for determining the number of part racks remaining on the supply lifter;

a moveable table having the supply lifter and a recovery lifter mounted thereon; and

equipment for positioning said supply lifter and said recovery lifter, said equipment being mounted to said movable table between said supply lifter and said recovery lifter to achieve a compact configuration.

25. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 24, wherein

by pulling out said movable table, an operator is able to add part racks holding parts to said supply lifter or remove used part racks from said recovery lifter while said analyzer continues to analyze samples.

26. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 24, wherein

the equipment for positioning the supply lifter and the recovery lifter located between the supply lifter and the recovery lifter includes

a first belt and first motor for controlling the position of the supply lifter, and

a second belt and a second motor for controlling the position of the recovery lifter.

27. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 24, wherein

said supply lifter, said recovery lifter, and said movable table are housed in a rack lift chamber having a door,

wherein said door is automatically locked while said supply lifter or said recovery lifter is in operation for preventing access thereto, and

wherein said door is able to be opened when both of said recovery lifter and said supply lifter are in an inactive position.

28. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 24, wherein

an alarm is sounded should the number of part racks remaining on said supply lifter reach a predetermined threshold.

29. (New) A part feeding device, comprising:

a supply lifter able to move a plurality of part racks while keeping the part racks stacked together, the part racks each holding a plurality of parts, the supply lifter able to raise the part racks to a rack separation station when the rack separation station is able to receive a new part rack;

a rack separator able to separate an uppermost one of the stacked part racks from the other part racks on said supply lifter;

a recovery lifter able to receive used part racks from which the parts have been consumed; and

a controller able to determine a number of part racks remaining on said supply lifter and a number of new part racks that can be added to said supply lifter.

30. (New) The part feeding device according to claim 29, wherein

said supply lifter and said recovery lifter are mounted on a movable table in a back-to-back relationship, and

wherein equipment for controlling positions of said supply lifter and said recover lifter is mounted to the movable table between said recovery lifter and said supply lifter to achieve a compact configuration for enabling the movable table to be pulled out for access to the supply lifter and the recovery lifter.

31. (New) The part feeding device according to claim 30, wherein

the equipment for positioning the supply lifter and the recovery lifter located between the supply lifter and the recovery lifter includes

a first belt and first motor for controlling the position of the supply lifter, and

a second belt and a second motor for controlling the position of the recovery lifter.

32. (New) The part feeding device according to claim 29, wherein

said supply lifter, said recovery lifter, and said movable table are housed in a rack lift chamber having a door,

wherein said door is automatically locked while said supply lifter or said recovery lifter is in operation for preventing access thereto, and

wherein said door is able to be opened when both of said recovery lifter and said supply lifter are in an inactive position.

33. (New) The part feeding device according to claim 29, wherein

an alarm is sounded should the number of part racks remaining on said supply lifter reach a predetermined threshold.

34. (New) The part feeding device according to claim 29, wherein

said recovery lifter or said supply lifter is raised and lowered through a space limited by a guide wall arranged to fit the size of said part rack, said guide wall being mounted to and moveable with said movable table.

35. (New) An automatic analyzer that analyzes samples by taking out a disposable nozzle tip from a part rack located on a part take-out station and pipetting a sample from a sample container in the taken-out nozzle tip to a reaction container, comprising:

a supply lifter for raising a plurality of stacked part racks holding unused disposable nozzle tips;

a rack separating device that separates an uppermost of said stacked part racks;

a recovery lifter for receiving used part racks;

a controller for determining a number of part racks remaining on the supply lifter and a number of new part racks that can be added to the supply lifter; and

a moveable table having the supply lifter and a recovery lifter mounted thereon in a back-to-back relationship.

36. (New) The automatic analyzer according to claim 35, wherein

an alarm is sounded should the number of part racks remaining on said supply lifter reach a predetermined threshold.